

What is claimed is:

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1. An electronic camera having a plurality of functions including capturing and recording images, comprising:
  - an operation input unit for inputting external operations that designate corresponding functions of the camera to be performed;
  - an image pickup unit for capturing an image of an object;
  - a recorder for recording the image captured by the image pickup unit on a recording medium;
  - a playback unit for at least playing back image information that is recorded on the recording medium; and
  - a mode selector for selecting one operation mode of the camera from a plurality of available operation modes that include an operation explanation mode,  
wherein if the operation explanation mode is selected at the mode selector, the playback unit plays back an operation guide that is pre-stored in a memory, the operation guide explaining at least one of the external operations and corresponding camera functions thereof.

2. The electronic camera according to claim 1, wherein while the electronic camera is set to the operation explanation mode by the mode selector, the playback unit plays back the operation guide for the camera operation that is designated by the operation input unit.

3. The electronic camera according to claim 2, wherein while the electronic camera is set to the operation explanation mode by the mode selector, the playback unit plays back the

operation guide for the camera operation that is inputted by the operation input unit without actually performing the corresponding camera function designated by that camera operation.

4. The electronic camera according to claim 1, further comprising a recording medium drive for driving a detachable recording medium,

wherein the mode selector automatically selects the operation explanation mode in response to attachment to the recording medium drive of the detachable recording medium having the operation guide stored thereon.

5. The electronic camera according to claim 4, wherein the recorder records the image created by the image pickup unit on the detachable recording medium.

6. The electronic camera according to claim 1, further comprising an internal memory having the operation guide stored thereon.

7. The electronic camera according to claim 1, wherein the mode selector is externally accessible to select one of the operation modes of the camera.

8. The electronic camera according to claim 7, wherein the mode selector includes a mode selection button adapted to select one of the operation modes of the camera.

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The electronic camera according to claim 1, wherein the playback unit plays back the operation guide in the form of sound.

10. The electronic camera according to claim 1, wherein the playback unit plays back the operation guide in the form of images.

11. The electronic camera according to claim 1, wherein when the operation explanation mode is selected at the mode selector, the playback unit automatically plays back an operation guide that explains overall operations of the electronic camera.

12. The electronic camera according to claim 1, wherein the operation input unit includes mechanical switches that each can be operated to designate the corresponding functions of the camera.

13. The electronic camera according to claim 1, wherein the operation input unit includes touch screen switches that each can be operated to designate the corresponding functions of the camera.

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14. An electronic camera, comprising:

an image pickup unit for capturing an image of an object;

a recorder for recording the image captured by the image pickup unit on a recording medium;

a playback unit for at least playing back image information that is recorded on the recording medium;

a mode selector for selecting a function diagnosis mode; and

a function tester for testing functions of the camera if the function diagnosis mode is selected by the mode selector.

15. The electronic camera according to claim 14, wherein the image pickup unit captures the image in accordance with an external operation specifying an image pickup function of the image pickup unit, and

wherein while the camera is set to the function diagnosis mode by the mode selector, the function tester tests the image pickup function of the image pickup unit specified by the external operation.

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16. The electronic camera according to claim 14, wherein the playback unit plays back image information that is recorded on the recording medium in accordance with an external operation specifying a playback function of the playback unit, and

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wherein while the camera is set to the function diagnosis mode by the mode selector, the function tester tests the playback function of the playback unit specified by the external operation.

17. The electronic camera according to claim 14, wherein the playback unit includes a display unit for displaying test results generated by the function tester.

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18. An electronic camera having a plurality of functions including capturing and recording images, the electronic camera comprising:

a mode selector externally switchable to select one of a function diagnosis mode and a normal mode;

an operation input unit for inputting external operations that initiate corresponding functions of the camera while the camera is in the normal mode;

an image pickup unit for capturing the image of an object in accordance with the external operations inputted through the operation input unit while the camera is in the normal mode;

a recorder for recording the image captured by the image pickup unit in accordance with the external operations inputted through the operation input unit while the camera is in the normal mode;

a playback unit for at least playing back image information that is recorded on the recording medium in accordance with the external operations inputted through the operation input unit while the camera is in the normal mode; and

a function tester for testing functions of at least one of the operation input unit, the image pickup unit, the recorder, and the playback unit, when the function diagnosis mode is selected by the mode selector.

19. The electronic camera according to claim 18, wherein the function tester automatically tests functions of at least one of the operation input unit, the image pickup unit, the recorder, and the playback unit, in response to the selection of the function diagnosis mode by the mode selector.

20. The electronic camera according to claim 18, wherein while the camera is set to the function diagnosis mode by the mode selector, the function tester tests the function of the camera that would be initiated in response to the external operation if the camera were in the normal mode.

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21. An electronic camera having a plurality of functions including capturing and recording images, the electronic camera comprising:

a mode selector externally switchable to select one of an operation explanation mode, a function diagnosis mode, and a normal mode;

an operation input unit for inputting external operations that initiate corresponding functions of the camera while the camera is in the normal mode;

an image pickup unit for capturing the image of an object in accordance with the external operations inputted through the operation input unit while the camera is in the normal mode;

a recorder for recording the image captured by the image pickup unit in accordance with the external operations inputted through the operation input unit while the camera is in the normal mode;

a playback unit for at least playing back image information that is recorded on the recording medium in accordance with the external operations inputted through the operation input unit while the camera is in the normal mode; and

a function tester for testing functions of at least one of the operation input unit, the image pickup unit, the recorder, and the playback unit, when the function diagnosis mode is selected by the mode selector,

wherein if the operation explanation mode is selected at the mode selector, the playback unit plays back an operation guide that is pre-stored in a memory, the operation guide explaining at least one of the camera operations and functions thereof.

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22. An electronic camera having a plurality of functions including capturing and recording images, comprising:

input means for inputting external operations that designate corresponding functions of the camera to be performed;

capture means for capturing an image of an object;

recording means for recording the image captured by the capturing means on a recording medium;

playback means for playing back image information that is recorded on the recording means; and

selecting means for selecting an operation mode of the camera from a plurality of available operation modes, where one operation mode is an operation explanation mode,

wherein if the operation explanation mode is selected at the selecting means, the playback means plays back an operation guide that is pre-stored in a memory, the operation guide explaining at least one of the external operations and corresponding camera functions thereof.

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23. An electronic camera, comprising:

capturing means for capturing an image of an object;

recording means for recording the image captured by the capturing means on a recording medium;

playback means for playing back image information that is recorded on the recording medium;

selecting means for selecting a function diagnosis mode; and

testing means for testing functions of the camera if the function diagnosis mode is selected by the selecting means.